

# THE EGYPTIAN POLICY OF JUSTINIAN

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# I

THE Egyptian policy of Justinian must be seen in relation to the situation that confronted him at his accession in 527—or, rather, when his predominant influence in civil and ecclesiastical affairs began with his uncle's accession in 518.<sup>1</sup> Then, as throughout its history as a Roman province, Egypt was a jewel in the imperial crown, but a very unusual jewel. Its Roman rulers were mainly interested in its revenues, especially in its important contribution to the grain supply of the capital, first Rome and later Constantinople. Their benevolence rarely went beyond the warning of Tiberius to one of his prefects, that he had been sent to Egypt to shear the sheep, not to skin them.<sup>2</sup> As long as this main interest was secured, however, local Egyptian institutions varied considerably from the imperial norm during most of this long period. But at least in appearance this Egyptian exceptionalism was reduced under Septimius Severus by the establishment of municipal government in the nome capitals, and then under Diocletian by the abolition of local Egyptian currency and the

<sup>1</sup> As noted by Procopius from two points of view in *Secret History* vi, 18, and *Buildings* I iii, 3; cf. the prominent part of Justinian in the negotiations with the Pope in 518–520, as shown in the correspondence in the *Collectio Avellana* (see A. A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First, An Introduction to the Epoch of Justinian the Great*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies, I [Cambridge, Mass., 1950], pp. 160–200). Chief sources on the general topic are the chroniclers of Alexandrian church affairs, whose interests are not exclusively ecclesiastical; on the Chalcedonian side, Liberatus, *Breviarium Causae Nestorianorum et Eutychianorum* (in E. Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, 2, vol. 5 [Berlin, 1936], pp. 98–141); on the Monophysite, the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, ed. and tr. B. Evetts (for this period pt. II, “Peter I to Benjamin I” in *Patrologia Orientalis*, I [Paris, 1907], pp. 380–518), and *The Syriac Chronicle Known as that of Zachariah of Mytilene*, tr. F. J. Hamilton and E. W. Brooks (London, 1899) and ed. and tr. E. W. Brooks in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Orientalium, Scriptores Syri*, 3rd Ser., 5–6 (Paris-Louvain, 1919–1924); it seems unlikely that the Monophysite layman whose chronicle is incorporated in the opening books of this work was identical with the Chalcedonian Bishop of Mytilene in the 530's. The Monophysite leader John of Ephesus is a vivid contemporary chronicler of events at Constantinople under Justinian (*Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. and tr. E. W. Brooks in PO, 17, pp. 1–306, 18, pp. 509–698, and 19, pp. 151–286 [Paris, 1923, 1924, 1926]) and Justin II (*The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John Bishop of Ephesus*, tr. R. Payne Smith [Oxford, 1860], and ed. and tr. E. W. Brooks in CSCO, *Scriptores Syri*, 3rd Ser., 3 [Louvain, 1935–6], with some retrospective references). There are some significant references to Egyptian affairs in the contemporary Procopius and the ninth-century chronicler Theophanes, and other writers on ecclesiastical and monastic history. Government policy is reflected in the legal documents to be found in the *Codex Theodosianus* and *Corpus Juris Civilis*; and what these events meant for the common man is reflected in the papyri, especially the Apion papyri from Oxyrhynchus in Middle Egypt (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* [London, 1898–]), and those from Aphrodito in the Thebaid, in the Cairo and London collections (*Papyrus grecs d'époque byzantine*, ed. J. Maspero, 3 vols. [1911–1916], in *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire*, and *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, V, ed. H. I. Bell [London, 1917]). The best general modern account of Egypt in this period is that of Charles Diehl, “L'Égypte chrétienne et Byzantine,” in G. Hanotaux, *Histoire de la Nation égyptienne*, III (Paris, 1933), pp. 399–557, unfortunately without references; there is much detail on the subject in Ernest Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, II (Paris, 1949), and some treatment of it in A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1964). For church affairs there is the detailed study by Jean Maspero, *Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie depuis la mort de l'empereur Anastase jusqu'à la réconciliation des églises jacobites (518–616)* (Paris, 1923) (*Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études, sciences historiques et philologiques*, fasc. 237); briefer treatments in W. A. Wigram, *The Separation of the Monophysites* (London, 1923), and E. R. Hardy, *Christian Egypt, Church and People* (New York, 1952).

<sup>2</sup> Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, LVII, 10.

inclusion of Egypt in the new administrative scheme. By the mid-fourth century there were three provinces instead of one—Aegyptus in the western Delta, Augustamnica in the eastern, with Middle Egypt, and the Thebaid—and two military commanders—the Duke of Egypt and the Duke of the Thebaid. The Prefect of Egypt, once a vice-emperor for the whole country and for many purposes the heir of the Pharaohs, was now merely civil governor of Aegyptus under the Count of the East at Antioch. However, the province which included Alexandria was naturally the most important, and the prefect's responsibilities doubtless always included the concentration at the port of the annual grain shipment.<sup>3</sup>

With the increasing importance of the Christian Church in Egypt, its head, the Bishop of Alexandria, became a rival authority. By the fourth century he was known as Pope and Archbishop. In church affairs Egypt remained undivided; the Council of Nicaea in 325 formally recognized that the bishop's jurisdiction, even more extensive than the prefect's had been, extended over Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, in spite of the general principle that ecclesiastical organization was to parallel secular divisions.<sup>4</sup> By the end of the episcopate of Athanasius (328–373) prefect and duke together were scarcely a match for the bishop, as is shown by the merely token obedience given to Valens' order for the exile of Athanasius in 365–366.<sup>5</sup> Politically, the attempts of Constantius and Valens to install Arian bishops at Alexandria were efforts to replace the Egyptian pope by a more imperialist prelate—a parallel to the imperial introduction of Chalcedonian patriarchs in the sixth century. Bishop George, in possession at Alexandria from 356–361, was accused especially of exploiting the wealth of the Alexandrian Church, which also anticipates the situation of two centuries later.<sup>6</sup>

The imperial support of Arianism ended when Theodosius became emperor in 379, and shortly listed Peter of Alexandria along with Damasus of Rome as one of the approved centers of ecclesiastical communion.<sup>7</sup> However, there was some counter-balance to ecclesiastical authority in the separation of the patriarchal area from the jurisdiction of the Count of the East, the prefect as Vicar of the new Diocese of Egypt enjoying the honorary title of Augustal, by which he was thereafter commonly known. The change in title may date from 367, and the formal erection of the diocese probably took place in 380. Its new status soon appears in legislation, and is assumed at the Council of Constantinople in

<sup>3</sup> See details in Matthias Gelzer, *Studien zur Byzantinischen Verwaltung Ägyptens* (Leipzig, 1909), pp. 2–6—the three provinces appear in Ammianus Marcellinus XXII 16, 1. The *Notitia Dignitatum* gives a *comes Aegyptiaci limitis* (ed. Otto Seeck [Berlin, 1886], pp. 58–60), but the commander at Alexandria seems in fact to have held the lower rank of *dux*, perhaps so as not to outrank his civil colleague—or because he commanded actually garrison forces rather than a field army. The puzzling subheading in the *Notitia*, *provinciae Augustamnicae*, may imply a separate command for Augustamnica not otherwise recorded.

<sup>4</sup> Council of Nicaea, Canon 6.

<sup>5</sup> (Athanasius) *Festal Epistles*, Index, XXXVII, and *Historia Acephala* X 15–16 (in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd Ser., IV [New York, 1903], pp. 505 and 499).

<sup>6</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* LXXVI 1 (PG, 42, cols. 515–518); cf. Gregory Nazianzene, *Orations* 21, 21 (PG, 35, cols. 1105–1106).

<sup>7</sup> *Codex Theodosianus* XVI 1, 2.

381.<sup>8</sup> But these changes were more symbolic than of practical importance, since the diocesan vicars occupied the least significant rank in the imperial hierarchy. The bishops continued to be the leading figures in Egyptian life, and the annual sailing of the grain fleet to Constantinople brought energetic members of their flock to the capital. Sometimes this created a situation reminiscent of the expeditions of the war—fleets of the Ptolemies sailing in the same direction. Egyptian bishops arrived in the fleet of 378 and attempted to install their candidate on the episcopal throne,<sup>9</sup>—and twenty-five years later the sailors cheered their patriarch, Theophilus, when he arrived in 403 to launch his attack on John Chrysostom.<sup>10</sup> As in older days, the Aegean could easily be reached by an Egyptian fleet; and this fact has some connection with the Alexandrian dominance of the Councils that met at Ephesus in 431 and 449, and again in 475.

The division of authority in Egypt continued much the same through the fifth century. Civil authority was still further fractioned when Middle Egypt was separated from Augustamnica as the province of Arcadia, and the other three provinces were each divided into two. However, one of the first foreshadowings of the later reversal of the Diocletianic system was the arrangement made about 440 by which the Duke of the Thebaid was given supervision of the civil administration as well, at least in the Upper Thebaid. He thus became a kind of viceroy of the south, where the frontier needed serious attention against the raids of Blemmyes and Nobadae.<sup>11</sup> In such distant territory the imperial government may have felt it necessary to allow a concentration of local responsibility. Only occasional glimpses come to us of the growth of the large estates, private and ecclesiastical, which were to occupy so large a place in Egyptian life in the following century. The law of 415 recognizing the rights of patronage which many landowners, including the Churches of Constantinople and Alexandria, had acquired gave legal status to the development.<sup>12</sup>

In the first half of the century the successive patriarchs, Theophilus, Cyril, and Dioscorus, were obviously the leading personalities at Alexandria. The disorders of 412–415 were enough to indicate that if it came to a showdown

<sup>8</sup> A problem is created by the natural assumption that the change in title and the increase in authority came together. But there seems to be evidence that the title *augustalis* was first used in 367—a consular list notes for that year *eo anno introivit in Alexandria Tatianus primus Augustalis* (*Chronica Minora* I, p. 295, in MGH, *Auctores Antiquissimi*, IX [Berlin, 1884]), while Egypt first certainly appears as a separate diocese in 381, when the Council of Constantinople (Canon 2) directs that Bishops are to confine themselves to the affairs of their own dioceses, in particular those of Egypt to Egypt, and in a law of 383 (*Codex Theodosianus* XII 1, 97). See discussion Gelzer, *Studien*, p. 7, and A. H. M. Jones, "The Date of the *Apologia Contra Arianos* of Athanasius," *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S., V, [1954], pp. 224–227. Less correction of sources is required if one assumes that the honorific title, perhaps with some increase in authority, was granted by Valens in 367 or soon thereafter (and so the reference to an *augustalis* in 375 in Palladius, *Lausiaca History*, 46, need not be anachronistic), and Egypt formally made a separate diocese in 380 or 381.

<sup>9</sup> Gregory Nazianzene, *Carmen de seipso*, lines 890–891 (PG, 37, col. 1090).

<sup>10</sup> Palladius, *Dialogue on the Life of Chrysostom*, 8—as happened again when Timothy Aelurus passed through Constantinople on his return from exile in 475 (*The Syriac Chronicle Known as that of Zachariah of Mytilene* V 1); cf. the reference to "sophists and *naucleri*" among the leading laymen of Alexandria summoned to Constantinople in the time of Justin II (John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History*, I 33).

<sup>11</sup> See Gelzer, *Studien*, pp. 10–20.

<sup>12</sup> *Codex Theodosianus* XI 24, 6; cf. E. R. Hardy, *The Large Estates of Byzantine Egypt* (New York, 1931), pp. 22–24.

between bishop and prefect the division of power was at least even.<sup>13</sup> Cyril indeed overplayed his hand and partly failed in his bid for power. But the government shortly restored to him the control of the corps of *parabolani*, who functioned in principle as orderlies, but sometimes also as a kind of ecclesiastical private army.<sup>14</sup>

A possible change in the Alexandrian power structure appeared with the deposition of the Patriarch Dioscorus at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The charges against him were based on his domineering conduct rather than on the Monophysite doctrine which he and his successors supported.<sup>15</sup> A small but well-connected party at Alexandria were willing to accept the conciliar decisions. Doubtless they were moved partly by imperialist loyalty, partly by acceptance of ecumenical church authority, partly by conviction of the Chalcedonian doctrine of the two natures of Christ. On the death of the Emperor Marcian in 457, when the Duke happened to be absent from Alexandria, disorders followed such as have often marked the history of that city. A rival bishop, Timothy Aelurus, was consecrated, and shortly afterward the Chalcedonian Patriarch Proterius was killed in his own cathedral. Order was restored only by combining the authority of duke and prefect in the single hand of a special emissary from Constantinople.<sup>16</sup> Timothy was banished and another Timothy, Salophakiol, set up in his place. He was, it seems, a monk of the great Pachomian Monastery of the Metancia at Canopus, which remained a stronghold of the Chalcedonian, Proterian, or imperialist party, and was to produce three of its claimants for the patriarchal throne. A gentle soul at heart, he does not seem to have attempted to extend his authority outside Alexandria, though doubtless he controlled the estates of the Alexandrian Church.<sup>17</sup> Egypt generally remained loyal to its exiled Patriarch. After the accession of Zeno in 474 it was for several years under the control of his rival basiliscus who allowed Timothy Aelurus to return to his see, the other Timothy retiring to his cell, to be brought out again when Zeno was in control and Aelurus had died.<sup>18</sup> After Salophakiol's death in 481 the Monophysite Peter Mongus obviously had the support of Egypt, even though a monk of Canopus, John Talaia, accepted the episcopate in the Chalcedonian interest after promising not to aspire to it. Without government support he soon had to flee to Rome, leaving Peter in effective possession.<sup>19</sup>

Zeno's policy after 481 was evidently one of securing Egyptian goodwill by conciliation. It seems that in his time the municipal administration of the countryside disappeared in favor of the system of pagarchies, corresponding

<sup>13</sup> Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* VII 13-15.

<sup>14</sup> *Codex Theodosianus* XVI 2, 42-43; the *parabolani* were alleged to have helped to terrorize Dioscorus' opponents at the Robber Council of Ephesus in 449 (statement of Basil of Seleucia at Chalcedon in 451—in Schwartz, *Acta*, 2, vol. 1, p. 179).

<sup>15</sup> At the Second Session of the Council of Chalcedon—the charges against Dioscorus in Schwartz, *Acta*, 2, vol. 1, pp. 211-220.

<sup>16</sup> Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History* II 8; Liberatus, *Breviarium* 15; Zachariah III 2; 11; IV 2-3; 9.

<sup>17</sup> Evagrius II 11; Liberatus 16; Zachariah IV 10-11.

<sup>18</sup> Evagrius III 4-6; Liberatus 16; Zachariah V 1-5.

<sup>19</sup> Evagrius III 11-12; Liberatus 17; Zachariah V 6-7.

more or less to the traditional nomes, and commonly governed by local notables as pagarchs.<sup>20</sup> Zeno was long remembered as a benefactor of the shrine of St. Menas, the Lourdes or Fatima of the age, west of Alexandria, to which he gave the rank of a city, and of other holy places of Egypt.<sup>21</sup> Of one piece with his civil policy was his ecclesiastical. The *Henotikon* formula did not precisely repudiate Chalcedon, but enunciated the doctrines on which Monophysites and Chalcedonians agreed, repudiating any heresies that might have been taught at Chalcedon "or any other Synod."<sup>22</sup> At Constantinople and Jerusalem it was accepted by moderate Chalcedonians, though at the cost of the Acacian schism between Rome and Constantinople (484-519). At Alexandria and Antioch it was interpreted in a Monophysite sense. Peter Mongus was now in undisputed possession of the heritage of his predecessors. Almost his only trouble in Egypt was from the extremists of his own party who were satisfied with nothing less than a formal anathema on Chalcedon and its doctrines. The leader of this party of the *Acephali*, so-called because they did not go so far as to set up a rival patriarch, was Theodore, bishop of Antinoë, the capital of the Thebaid. One may conclude that its strength was in the more strictly Egyptian part of the country, away from the international influences of Alexandria and the Delta.<sup>23</sup>

Under Peter's successors, the Church of Egypt and the diocese generally enjoyed relative quiet—so much so that historians have observed that Alexandria, formerly a storm center of ecclesiastical and imperial politics, was now a backwater, and its patriarchs could enjoy the luxury of relative obscurity.<sup>24</sup> John II, who succeeded in 507, was a monk of Niciou in the Delta, which seems to reflect the beginning of the shift of ecclesiastical leadership from the sophisticated clergy of Alexandria to the Coptic ascetics of the hinterland.<sup>25</sup> Under the Emperor Anastasius, the *Henotikon* was increasingly interpreted in the Monophysite sense. The climax was reached with the installation of the outstanding theologian of the party, Severus, as Patriarch of Antioch in 512. To adapt the phrase of Jerome about the Arian triumph under Constantius, the Byzantine world groaned and awoke to find itself Monophysite;<sup>26</sup> and so the bishops of Alexandria found themselves in official favor. However, this very fact was against them at home, and the Alexandrians

<sup>20</sup> The change certainly seems to belong to the late fifth century; see Gelzer, *Studien* p. 96; the document there discussed, later published as P. Cairo 67,002, refers (II 18) to the ninth pagarch of Antaeopolis in office in 552 (or 567 if belonging to the same administration as P. Lond. 1674)—and P. Cairo 67,019 does not actually state that there were pagarchs under Zeno's predecessor Leo, but that the village of Aphrodito was exempt from their jurisdiction by the privilege of autopragia given it by that Emperor (lines 5-6; cf. Germaine Rouillard, *L'administration civile de l'Égypte byzantine* [Paris, 1928], p. 53). The *proteuon* of Arsinoë who issued directions for the collection of taxes in 487 was probably an early pagarch rather than one of the last of the municipal officials as Gelzer suggested (W. v. Hartel, "Ein griechischer Papyrus aus dem Jahre 487," *Wiener Studien*, V [1883-1884], pp. 1-41).

<sup>21</sup> K. M. Kaufmann, *Die Menasstadt* (Frankfurt, 1910), p. 105; on Zeno's generosity, see *History of the Patriarchs*, pp. 448-449; John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale* 175 (PG, 87, 3, col. 3044).

<sup>22</sup> Text in Evagrius III 14; Liberatus 17; Zachariah V 8.

<sup>23</sup> Zachariah V 9; VI 1-2; Liberatus 17.

<sup>24</sup> Wigram, *Separation*, p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> *History of the Patriarchs*, pp. 448-451; Liberatus 18; Zachariah VII 15.

<sup>26</sup> Jerome, *Dialogus adversus Luciferianos*, 19 (PL, 23, col. 172).

began again to show restlessness. About 509 there was fighting between the supporters of Bishop John and the military commander, which led to the burning of houses on either side.<sup>27</sup> After John's death in 516 Dioscorus II, a nephew of Timothy Aelurus, accepted an official appointment and installation. Popular elements—the circus parties of Alexandria and visitors from the country—demanded that he accept a second and more popular enthronement. Even so, when the Augustal and the Duke appeared at his first Liturgy there followed a riot in which the Augustal was killed. Dioscorus went to Constantinople to intercede for the city (much as Flavian of Antioch had interceded for his people in 386), and secured restriction of the punishment that followed to the execution of forty ringleaders. A sign of the coming change in ecclesiastical parties was that the Monophysite prelate was hooted at in the streets of the capital, and hastily returned home.<sup>28</sup> Next year he was succeeded by Timothy III, and a year later Anastasius was dead. An Italian bishop of imperialist sentiments who visited Alexandria soon afterward praises Dioscorus for his devotion and Timothy for his excellent administration.<sup>29</sup> But there were obviously tensions not far below the surface of the Egyptian situation.

## II

Such was the situation that confronted Justin and Justinian on the former's accession to the Empire in 518. There followed in ecclesiastical politics what has been compared to a change of trumps at cards.<sup>30</sup> Chalcedon was proclaimed at Constantinople, and a year later unity with Rome was re-established, superficially at least on its own terms. Severus was soon expelled from Antioch as were some fifty loyally monophysite bishops from other sees in his patriarchate.<sup>31</sup> One of the papal legates to Constantinople was the Deacon Dioscorus, whom Pope Hormisdas suggested as a suitable candidate for the Church of Alexandria, his native place. He might have come to Rome with John Talaia, or have been a later refugee sympathetic with the remnants of the Proterian party at Alexandria. But the hint was not taken—probably indeed this Dioscorus had no desire for so dangerous an eminence.<sup>32</sup> Under Justin and in the early years of Justinian Timothy remained undisturbed and the Egyptian situation, civil and ecclesiastical, continued as it was.

We may now turn our attention to a family of Egyptian magnates who for three generations occupied a place of some importance in imperial affairs.

<sup>27</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia* A.M. 6001 (PG, 109, cols. 357–358); Liberatus 18.

<sup>28</sup> Theophanes A.M. 6009 (PG, 109, cols. 377–380); Liberatus 18.

<sup>29</sup> Maximian of Ravenna in Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Testi Rasponi, in L. A. Muratori, eds. G. Carducci and V. Fiorini, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, I (Bologna, 1924), pp. 200–201.

<sup>30</sup> Wigram, *Separation*, p. 65.

<sup>31</sup> See discussion of these events in Vasiliev, *Justin I*, pp. 132–212; list of expelled Bishops p. 226, from Michael Syrus, *Chronicon* IX 13 (*Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, ed. and tr. J-B Chabot [Paris, 1904], 2 vols., II, pp. 170–173).

<sup>32</sup> Letter of Pope Hormisdas in *Collectio Avellana* 175 (CSEL), 35 [Vienna, 1893], pp. 62–63; cf. Wigram's comment, *Separation*, pp. 93–94: "Possibly the Deacon knew his fellow countrymen too well to wish to share the martyrdom of Proterius."



The Apion family, as it is convenient to call them, have become well known through the happy circumstance that a large section of their estates were in the neighborhood of Oxyrhynchus; so their affairs are illuminated by the Oxyrhynchus papyri. The first Apion was probably the Apio Theodosius Johannes who was *praeses* of Arcadia in 489.<sup>33</sup> He moved into a larger sphere as quartermaster of Anastasius' Persian campaign of 503. As Procopius puts it, "Apion, an Egyptian, distinguished among the patricians and extremely energetic" was in charge of the finances of the army, and "the Emperor in writing made him a partner in the kingship, so that he might have authority to administer the finances as he wished." This does not of course mean that Apion was co-emperor but that he enjoyed within his sphere the viceregal powers of a pretorian prefect, though not actually holding the office.<sup>34</sup> The campaign, in which authority was curiously divided, was unsuccessful, though Apion was remembered locally for his energetic efforts to supply the army with bread from Edessa.<sup>35</sup> After all, as an Egyptian magnate he headed a large grain-producing enterprise. Although this commission was brief, he seems to have remained for some years as a well-known figure in court circles; Severus, at that time a representative of the Monophysites in the capital, dedicated one of his controversial works to him.<sup>36</sup> However, in 509–510 Apion fell from favor in some political overturn and was forcibly ordained presbyter at Nicaea.<sup>37</sup>

On Justin's accession Apion's fortunes changed. He returned to secular life and was promoted to the office of Pretorian Prefect. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that he accepted the ecclesiastical policy of the new government, on terms described by his son Strategius to a group of Syrian bishops in 533:

You yourselves know that my father Appius [sic] of glorious memory, himself a native of the province of Egypt and a follower of your sect and that of the Alexandrians hesitated to communicate with the holy great church established in this city [Constantinople], but the most pious and faithful Emperors persuaded him, by this argument, that the most reverend bishops who met at Chalcedon handed down to us no other creed or faith than that which was confirmed at Nicaea, at Constantinople, and at Ephesus—they also established the faith and condemned Nestorius and Eutyches, who were introducing new heresies; persuaded by this argument he communicated with the holy church.<sup>38</sup>

The formal position of the Monophysites was that they remained loyal to the faith of the first three Ecumenical Councils against the innovations of Chal-

<sup>33</sup> P. Oxy. 1877 and 1888 (in *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 16 [1924]).

<sup>34</sup> Procopius, *Persian War*, I 8, 5; Malalas, *Chronographia*, Bk. XVI (PG, 87, col. 589); Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A.M. 5997 (PG, 108, col. 349); cf. discussion of his position in Ernest Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, II, p. 95.

<sup>35</sup> *Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*, ed. and tr. W. Wright (Cambridge, 1882), chap. 54 (pp. 52, 44).

<sup>36</sup> John of Beth Aphthonia, *Vita Severi*, in *PO*, II (Paris, 1907), p. 234.

<sup>37</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, A.M. 6011 (PG, 108, cols. 384–385); *Chronicon Paschale* 519 (PG, 92, col. 859).

<sup>38</sup> Letter of Innocent of Maronia in Schwartz, *Acta*, 4, vol. 2 (Strasbourg, 1914), p. 170.

cedon; so the argument thus phrased was well adapted to smooth the transition to Chalcedonian Orthodoxy of an Egyptian layman who was doubtless, under the circumstances, only too willing to be converted to the imperial theology. Apion disappears from history after a brief tenure of high office; he was very probably dead before his successor is first mentioned in 519.<sup>39</sup> But Strategius continued the prosperity of the family. Some time before 523 he served as Augustal Prefect at Alexandria, and after what intervening stages we do not know comes into view as imperial commissioner at the conference just referred to. By then he was the *gloriosissimus patricius Strategius* and discharged the functions of the Master of the Offices, probably as a temporary *locum tenens* during a vacancy. We will see him in the next few years, I believe, as the imperial expert on Egyptian affairs.

Egypt became a refuge for Monophysite exiles from other parts of the Empire, and hence became the scene of the internal division of the party between its two leading theologians, Severus of Antioch as posterity now knows him, and Julian of Halicarnassus. As was common in the Byzantine world, theological and non-theological factors were closely interlocked. I would not wish to deny that the theology was real theology, any more than that the politics was real politics, but it is fascinating to note that not only major political divisions but lesser subdivisions correspond to parallel dogmatic differences. Severus in retrospect seems to differ from the position of Chalcedon only in his refusal to accept the actual formula "in two natures," since he vigorously defended the genuine humanity of Jesus. Julian was closer to a really Monophysite position, arguing that, since God and Man were joined in one *physis*, Jesus must have shared the divine quality of incorruptibility. The controversy remains in memory largely because of the delightful nomenclature it produced—Julianists, phantasiasts, *aphthartodocetae* on the one hand, Severians or *phthartolatrae* on the other.<sup>40</sup> Severianism was ultimately to triumph as Monophysite or non-Chalcedonian Orthodoxy. But at the moment Julianism seemed congruous with Alexandrian theology and found its place in Alexandrian politics. As the stricter *acephali* represented the national feelings of Upper Egypt, so the party of Severus appealed to the more aristocratic, international, imperialist classes of Alexandria, and the Julianists to the more popular elements. Only the patronage of the Duke of Egypt, Aristomachus, was able to secure permission for the monks of Severus' party to erect churches and towers of refuge, in those days the only major buildings of the still unwall'd desert monastic communities.<sup>41</sup> As long as Timothy survived the divisions were obscured, but at his death they would come to the surface.

The 530's are the golden decade of Justinian, marked by the apparent success of his imperial revival and signalized by the two great monuments of

<sup>39</sup> Apion as Pretorian Prefect, Malalas, *Chronographia*, Bk. XVII (PG, 97, col. 607); he is addressed as such on December 1, 518 (*Codex Justinianus* VII 63, 3), Marinus on the following November 9, 519 (*ibid.*, V 27, 7).

<sup>40</sup> Zachariah VII 1; IX 9-13; Liberatus 19.

<sup>41</sup> *History of the Patriarchs*, p. 458.

his work that still remain, the Church of the Holy Wisdom and the *Codex Juris Civilis*. After the suppression of the Nika Revolt in 532 there followed the "Eternal Peace" with Persia, which gave at least a breathing space of seven or eight years. Then in 533-534 came the reconquest of Roman Africa from the Vandals, and thereafter what seemed to be the beginning of an equally successful campaign against the Goths in Italy. Carthage and soon after Rome and Ravenna were once more in imperial hands, and the time seemed ripe for effective reorganization of the government under the vigorous and efficient, if not always popular, administration of the Pretorian Prefect John the Cappadocian. Justinian's government might well have proceeded shortly on its own to develop an Egyptian policy at last. In any case the events which followed the death of Timothy in 535 brought the matter to a head.

No discussion of the age of Justinian is complete without some consideration of the position of Theodora, who was soon to appear as patroness of the Severian party at Alexandria. Historians as well as contemporaries have been puzzled by the paradox that Emperor and Empress supported rival ecclesiastical parties. Ultimately I suppose that Theodora still keeps her own counsel behind the burning eyes that look down on us from the mosaics of Ravenna. Certainly in some matters she was able to produce results contrary to her husband's preferences. The palace intrigues which led to the fall of John in 541 may be a case in point, though even then the Emperor had to be persuaded that John was indeed becoming disloyal. One need not doubt the genuineness of Theodora's Monophysite sympathies—which I would associate less with theological convictions, which were her husband's specialty, than with admiration for the ascetics of the party. Severus did not think highly of the "elect lady" as a theological expert, although the point on which he corrects her opinions was indeed rather a recondite one—she had failed to remember that the terms *ousia* and *hypostasis*, later distinguished, were used interchangeably at the time of the Council of Nicaea.<sup>42</sup> It is not wholly true to say that "her kingdom was of this world."<sup>43</sup> It is important for our story that she had been in Egypt. After the end of her liaison with the governor of Pentapolis she passed through Alexandria on the way to the greater future which awaited her in the imperial city. Even Procopius at his nastiest has only vague hints to offer about her conduct at this time; and a different story, perhaps even a conversion, could be made, as some novelists have tried to do, out of the later tradition in Monophysite circles that she considered Bishop Timothy her spiritual father.<sup>44</sup>

While Theodora's Monophysite loyalties were genuine, and her influence not to be underestimated, it does seem that Justinian intentionally tolerated

<sup>42</sup> *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus Patriarch of Antioch*, ed. and tr. E. W. Brooks (London, 1903), 2 vols. in 4, sec. I 63 (vol. II, 1, p. 197).

<sup>43</sup> Berthold Rubin, *Das Zeitalter Iustiniens*, I (Berlin, 1960), p. 120.

<sup>44</sup> *Secret History* ix, 27-28; Monophysite tradition in *The Chronicle of John Bishop of Nikiu*, tr. from Zotenberg's Ethiopic text by R. H. Charles (London, 1916); xc, 87 (p. 144); fictional treatment in John Masefield, *Basilissa, A Tale of the Empress Theodora* (London, 1940), pp. 1-16; and with more approach to historical possibilities in Harold Lamb, *Theodora and the Emperor, The Drama of Justinian* (Garden City, 1952), pp. 29-34.

her pro-Monophysite actions, including the amusing support of a Monophysite monastery in the palace of Hormisdas, as a means of keeping in contact with a party which he could not completely suppress.<sup>45</sup> It is hard to say whether politically this made things better or worse than decisive commitment to one side or the other would have done. It may have seemed the only possibility for an Empire which stretched from the Tiber to the Euphrates. After the energetic anti-Monophysite measures of earlier years Justinian began a series of efforts at compromise or conciliation with the colloquy of 533, at which Strategius had addressed the Syrian Bishops. Among the Chalcedonian members of the colloquy was Bishop Anthimus of Trebizond, who was it seems already half-Monophysite in his sympathies and a protege of Theodora.<sup>46</sup> When vacancies occurred in 535 at both Constantinople and Alexandria she was at the height of her influence in ecclesiastical affairs, and was able to install her candidates in both sees, beginning with the translation of Anthimus to the imperial city.<sup>47</sup> But events were soon to take a different turn.

### III

As the crucial year 536 approaches a fascinating set of *dramatis personae* confronts us. At Constantinople there are the Emperor and Empress surrounded by a group of able assistants—the Pretorian Prefect John of Cappadocia, the Egyptian Strategius who since 533 had been Count of the Sacred Largesses (approximately finance minister), and Anthimus of Trebizond who was prepared to support the Emperor's current policy of ecclesiastical conciliation, and indeed even to go further. At Alexandria the Prefect Dioscorus and the Duke Aristomachus are confronted by lay and clerical leaders of the Severian and Julianist parties. Theodora, who had instigated the promotion of a semi-Monophysite to the imperial see, was now responsible for the installation of a moderate Monophysite at Alexandria. On the death of Timothy, one of her chamberlains, Calotychius, had joined with the prefect, the duke, magnates and clergy in the choice of the Deacon Theodosius.<sup>48</sup> The way seemed open for ecclesiastical and political pacification along lines similar to those of the *Henotikon*. For this purpose a grand conference met early in 536 at which Severus himself was present. But all was in vain as the Chalcedonians gathered their forces under the leadership of the Pope and Patriarch of older Rome, Agapetus, who came to Constantinople primarily on a political mission for the Gothic King Theodahad. Anthimus was forced to retire as an uncanonically translated bishop, and Agapetus himself consecrated his Chalcedonian successor Mennas on March 13.<sup>49</sup> Imperial policy now swung back to strict

<sup>45</sup> The *Mittelpunkt der offiziell geduldeten Untergrundbewegung*, as Rubin puts it (*Zeitalter Iust.*, p. 113), vividly described by John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 47, in PO, 18, pp. 474–482.

<sup>46</sup> Innocent of Maronia in Schwartz, *Acta*, 4, vol. 2, p. 169.

<sup>47</sup> Victor Tunnunensis, *Chronicon* 537 (MGH, AA XI, p. 199).

<sup>48</sup> Liberatus 20; *History of the Patriarchs*, p. 459.

<sup>49</sup> Zachariah IX 15–16, 20; Liberatus 20–21; Evagrius IV 11.

Chalcedonianism, and a Council which met through the spring and summer renewed the excommunication of Severus and extended it to Anthimus.<sup>50</sup> Both leaders were banished from the capital. Severus retired to his retreat with a wealthy patron at Xoïs in the Delta, where he died two years later, and Anthimus officially could not be found, though he had actually only gone down the street to the Empress' monastery.<sup>51</sup> Anthimus, Severus, and Theodosius of Alexandria solemnly exchanged letters of communion.<sup>52</sup> But two of these prelates had lost possession of their sees, and the third was soon not much better off.

Justinian's change of policy may have been stimulated partly by the fact that his mind was now turning toward the Chalcedonian West, where Belisarius was on his way to the reoccupation of Rome—and partly by the crisis which developed at Alexandria. The supporters of Theodosius at this stage sound very much like the elements which had made up the imperialist or Proterian party. When he made his first appearance as patriarch another Alexandrian riot broke out, and a rival who might indeed have been Timothy's logical successor, the Archdeacon Gaianus, was set up by what sounds like a roster of Egyptian society:

some of the clergy, the landowners of the city, the guilds, the soldiers, the nobles, and the whole province.

It was beyond the power of local forces to restore Theodosius, and perhaps Aristomachus didn't much want to. But soldiers released from the Persian War were available, and arrived under the command of a prominent defector from the Persian army, the Persarmenian Narses (not to be confused with his more famous compatriot, the Eunuch Narses, later commander in Italy). If Narses belonged to the Armenian Church he was at least a moderate Monophysite himself. In any case, he had to engage in some hard fighting in the streets of Alexandria, where it was remembered later that women had thrown tiles from the rooftops. Theodosius was able to resume his functions, and Gaianus was banished to Sardinia, where he died, probably some years later.<sup>53</sup>

On further reflection it must have seemed preposterous to support by force of arms the less popular division of a party which the Emperor was again determined to consider heretical. Theodosius was asked to accept the Chalcedonianism now established in the other Eastern patriarchates, and on his refusal was given an invitation to Constantinople which he was in no position to decline. With dramatic firmness he declared that though his body might belong to the Emperor his soul was his own. In consequence he was interned at Derkon some miles up the Bosphorus, from which he moved a

<sup>50</sup> Schwartz, *Acta*, 3 (Berlin, 1940), pp. 110-123, 178-186.

<sup>51</sup> *History of the Patriarchs*, p. 457; John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 48, in PO, 18, pp. 482-488.

<sup>52</sup> Texts in Zachariah IX 21-26 (at which point this source is unfortunately broken off); this exchange of letters would seem to belong to the brief period in 536 when Anthimus and Theodosius were in possession of their sees and Severus a visitor at Constantinople.

<sup>53</sup> Liberatus 20; *History of the Patriarchs*, pp. 459-461.

year or two later to join the monastery in the Palace of Hormisdas.<sup>54</sup> Theodora's policy had now failed, and the way was open for a new approach to the Egyptian situation, behind which we can probably see the hand of the Count Strategius as well as that of the Prefect John.

"No nonsense at Alexandria" was now the imperial policy. Ecclesiastical and political reorganization went hand in hand, the former leading. Another Pachomian Abbot, probably of Canopus, known from the mother house of his order as Paul the Tabennesiot, was willing to accept the dangerous position of Chalcedonian Patriarch of Alexandria. He was at the moment at Constantinople on account of a quarrel with his monks, very likely due to his imperialist or Chalcedonian sympathies. As an Egyptian who might be acceptable to Egypt, he was sponsored by the papal *apocrisiarius*, the Deacon Pelagius, and consecrated by the Patriarch Mennas. An Egyptian chronicler notes that from this time on the Melkite, or imperialist patriarchs, were consecrated abroad and sent to Egypt<sup>55</sup>—and one might add that after the brief pontificate of Paul they were all foreigners.

The consecration of Paul the Tabennesiot falls in the first indiction year, 537–538. Closely connected with these events is the general reorganization of the Egyptian administration by Edict XIII, which belongs in the following year, 538–539, and, for reasons which will shortly be stated, I think to the first part of it. The Egyptian administration was now finally divided, but consolidated in each division. The vicarial status of the prefect, which had survived the general suppression of such positions in 535, was now finally abolished, and so indeed was that ancient title. His office was combined with that of Duke of Egypt, and he henceforth ruled the province of Aegyptus as Augustal Duke. Similar status and the same honorific title were given to the Duke of the Thebaid, and less dignified governors exercised civil and military authority in the provinces of Augustamnica, Arcadia, and Libya. The Augustal Duke at Alexandria retained special responsibility for assembling the annual "happy shipment," *aisia embole*, of grain for the capital, which was, as before, the imperial government's chief interest in Egyptian affairs. It was now fixed at the sum of 8,000,000 *artabae*. With a double staff, civil and military, and a large salary which it was hoped would satisfy his financial desires, the Augustal was one of the leading provincial officials.<sup>56</sup> Under the regime of Edict XIII Egypt was thus reorganized along lines suggestive of the later Byzantine system of themes. However, the constitution thus provided for it offered further checks and balances besides those produced by the division of the country. The local civil and military officials, pagarchs, and tribunes, were to be appointed and removed from Constantinople, and there is some suggestion that in Egypt as elsewhere Justinian thought in terms of replacing the Diocletianic dichotomy of civil and military authorities by one of political

<sup>54</sup> *History of the Patriarchs*, pp. 463–464; Liberatus 20 *fin.*

<sup>55</sup> Liberatus 20; *History of the Patriarchs*, pp. 466, 469.

<sup>56</sup> Edict XIII in *Corpus Juris Civilis*, eds. R. Schell and W. Kroll, 4th ed. (1912), III, pp. 780–795; see discussion in Stein, *Histoire*, pp. 477–479, and Germaine Rouillard, *L'administration civile de l'Égypte byzantine*, esp. pp. 27–47.

and ecclesiastical, both of course under his ultimate control. There are references in the Edict to the rights of asylum which the bishop and the augustal possessed, which were not to be allowed to interfere with payments due the government,<sup>57</sup> and to inaugurate the new system Paul was sent off to his new position with the right to demand full cooperation from the civil authorities, at least within the province of Aegyptus.<sup>58</sup>

The date of Edict XIII can, I believe, be more precisely fixed within the indiction year 538–539. It refers to the system of revenue collection at Alexandria which existed before and after the administration of the most glorious Strategius, now Count of the Largesses, up to the previous second indiction fifteen years before (523–524).<sup>59</sup> Since he is not mentioned as the originator of the system, nor as the last under whom it was in effect, the purpose of the reference would seem to be to acknowledge his position as the government's informant and adviser on Egyptian affairs. In 537 the honorary office of Consul was revived by a law addressed to Strategius in his capacity as Count of the Largesses, which was intended to make it a less expensive honor. Its last holders were, in 538 John of Cappadocia, in 540 the Emperor's cousin Justin, in 541 a distinguished Senator, Albinus, and in 539 Strategius' son Apion (II).<sup>60</sup> It does seem to me that the most probable explanation is that the dignity was intended for his father who had died during the last months of the preceding year, after the beginning of the new indiction on September 1. Ernest Stein offers another theory—that the possible opposition of Egyptian magnates to the new system was prevented by retaining Strategius and Apion at Constantinople, the one occupied with his official duties, the other with his honorific functions.<sup>61</sup> But the other suggestion seems to me more likely, especially since the evidence suggests rather strongly that Strategius was a supporter of the new organization of Egypt, if not one of those mainly responsible for it (and the consulate in its last phase called for public appearances only at the beginning and end of the year). 538 could easily be the date of Strategius' last appearance in history, as one of the imperial mediators in the boundary dispute in Syria which was to lead to the renewal of the Persian war in 540.<sup>62</sup> There is, in any case no reference to him after that year, and his successor, Peter Barsymes, was in office by 541.<sup>63</sup> After two generations of prominence in the imperial court the family seems to have retired to its native province. Apion's later career was certainly mainly devoted to his Egyptian estates, which is typical of the state of Egypt and the behavior of its leading citizens in the later years of Justinian.

<sup>57</sup> Edict XIII 9; 10; 28.

<sup>58</sup> Procopius, *Secret History* xxvii 3–4; Liberatus 23.

<sup>59</sup> Edict XIII 15–16; on Strategius as Count of the Sacred Largesses, see Hardy, *Large Estates of Byzantine Egypt*, pp. 30–31; Stein, *Histoire*, p. 433.

<sup>60</sup> Justinian, *Novel* 105; W. Liebenam, *Fasti consulares imperii Romani* (Bonn, 1910), p. 51.

<sup>61</sup> *Histoire*, p. 477; I regret that Stein is no longer among us to discuss his comment that "la raison pur laquelle Hardy l.c. p. 32 suppose que Strategius mourut en 538 n'est pas valable" (*ibid.*, p. 433, note 3).

<sup>62</sup> Procopius, *Persian War*, II 1, 9–11.

<sup>63</sup> Justinian Edict VII, 6 (cf. Stein, *Histoire*, p. 762).

To the period of vigorous imperial interest in Egypt probably belong several other episodes which are not precisely dated in our sources. One of the more amusing anecdotes of Byzantine historiography is the story of the rival Chalcedonian and Monophysite missions to the Nobadae, sponsored by the Emperor and Empress, which raced each other up the Nile. Allegedly the Emperor's mission was delayed by the Duke of the Thebaid in response to a vigorous hint from Theodora, and so the Nubian Church began under Monophysite auspices.<sup>64</sup> Justinian was certainly aware that the Christian mission beyond the imperial borders had its value as an instrument of imperial policy. But in Nubia, as in the similar case of the Ghassanids on the Syrian frontier, he could scarcely have hoped that any form of Christianity would succeed in these remote places except that prevalent in the provinces nearest to them. I suspect that the imperial mission was rather a formal gesture, not really intended to achieve its supposed purpose. A similar episode had been the use of the Patriarch Timothy of Alexandria and his synod as an organ of diplomatic communication with Elasboas of Ethiopia in 525, conveying to him Justin's encouragement for his proposed Arabian campaign after the martyrdoms at Najran.<sup>65</sup> And contemporaries as well as modern historians have suspected that there was some agreement behind the apparent rivalry of Emperor and Empress in their patronage of the two ecclesiastical parties.<sup>66</sup>

With the Christianization of the Nobadae one may associate the closing of the temples at Philae to which they had been accustomed to descend for the worship of Isis.<sup>67</sup> This was carried through by Narses the Persarmenian, and is best placed at the end of his Egyptian career, perhaps in 541, before he was called back to the Persian Wars. To the secular side of Egyptian policy belongs the construction of a defensive wall for the section of Alexandria where the grain supply was assembled, an action made necessary, Procopius tells us, by the disorderly habits of the Alexandrians<sup>68</sup>—such as had been exemplified in 535–536.

#### IV

After 540 the imperial policy toward Egypt reverts to the older tolerant attitude, or perhaps one should rather say that there gradually ceases to be an imperial policy. Justinian's attention was diverted elsewhere by the renewal of the Persian Wars, the long continuance of the fighting in Italy, and other problems nearer home—and the occasional dealings with Egypt which we hear about suggest that Constantinople found it hard to regulate the actions of

<sup>64</sup> John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* IV 6–7.

<sup>65</sup> *Martyrium Arethae* 28 (in *Acta Sanctorum*, October, vol. X, p. 743). Cf. Vasiliev, *Justin*, pp. 283–299, on this episode generally.

<sup>66</sup> Evagrius IV 10, and, less politely, Procopius, *Secret History* x 14–15; cf., among moderns, E. L. Woodward, *Christianity and Nationalism in the Later Roman Empire* (London, 1916), pp. 53–56.

<sup>67</sup> Procopius, *Persian War*, I 19, 36–37.

<sup>68</sup> *Buildings* VI 1, 1–4.



its Egyptian agents, ecclesiastical and secular, or even to keep informed of what they were doing. The Edict of 539 complained of this problem,<sup>69</sup> and did little to solve it. Paul the Tabennesiot turned out to be both ineffective and scandalous. With the cooperation of the civil power he had been able to seize the churches of Alexandria, and so apparently succeed in his commission "to win over the heretics among the Alexandrians to the Council of Chalcedon." Significantly Procopius here speaks of Alexandrians, not Egyptians: there is little evidence of the activity of Paul and his successors outside of Alexandria.<sup>70</sup> He was authorized to demand the support of the officials of the new administration, even, it was said, to remove—which I suppose means recommend the removal of—military and civil officials. But there was opposition in his own household. The Deacon Psoius, steward of the Alexandrian Church, warned a military commander, Elias (perhaps the last Duke of Egypt) of his intentions in a letter in Coptic. Paul intercepted this and read it—Psoius had perhaps forgotten that his superior was an Egyptian too—and at his request the Augustal Rhodon arrested Psoius, who died in prison, according to rumor under torture. The result was a general clearance of the officials involved, in which the Empress may have seen a chance to get rid of opponents of her policies. Rhodon was recalled to Constantinople and executed, and Paul's lay adviser, the ex-Samaritan Arsenius, suffered the same fate at Alexandria under Rhodon's successor Liberius, very probably the first augustal duke. Paul was given an ecclesiastical trial before the papal legate and the patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem, meeting at Gaza, and was deposed. Some years later he turned up at Constantinople with great wealth, presumably accumulated during his brief pontificate, with which he hoped to secure restoration to his see. But it was, of course, already occupied and Pope Vigilius, who had arrived at Constantinople in 547, refused to cancel the sentence which his representative had given.<sup>71</sup>

Paul's successor was a Syrian monk Zoilus, who seems to have continued his predecessor's policy without being able to carry it any further. If the Chalcedonian patriarchs from now on were foreigners, the government of Egypt began to return to the hands of Egyptians. The fall of John the Cappadocian in 541 seems to mark the end of vigorous central intervention in Egyptian affairs. Rhodon had been a Phoenician and Liberius an Italian patrician, formerly in the service of Theodoric. But the next appointee, John Laxarion, was an Egyptian, nephew of the *comes rerum privatarum*, Eudaemon—in whom we may see another case, like that of Apion and Strategius, of an

<sup>69</sup> Edict XIII, 1.

<sup>70</sup> *Secret History* xxvii, 5; Liberatus (23) similarly says that he might have won over "the whole city and the monasteries."

<sup>71</sup> Procopius, *Secret History* xxvii 3–25—one may use the *Secret History* with some confidence when, as here, it interlocks with another source, or refers to public events. Paul is elsewhere said to have been deposed for commemorating Dioscorus (Victor Tunnunensis, *Chronicon*, for 541, in MGH, *AA*, XI, p. 199) or, according to another story, Severus (Theophanes A.M. 6033, PG, 108, cols. 447–448)—which perhaps might have been an attempt at conciliating his flock. In the next century the story was remembered in the amusingly confused form of misconduct with a deacon in a bath (John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* xcii 7, p. 145).

Egyptian magnate whose experience at home prepared him for high office in the imperial financial administration. Unhappily, court intrigues, which Procopius ascribes to the rival influence of Pelagius and Theodora, led to doubt about who was in office, and in a brawl between the armed attendants of the two officials John was killed. Liberius was recalled to Constantinople, but suffered nothing worse than a fine, and in spite of his great age appears later as commander in Sicily and Spain.<sup>72</sup> Later Egyptian officials whom we can name seem to be natives of the province. Apion the ex-consul was Duke of the Thebaid in 549–550;<sup>73</sup> Hephaestus, an Alexandrian lawyer, Augustal Duke at Alexandria about the same time. He may previously have been Duke of the Thebaid.<sup>74</sup> At Alexandria he commended himself to imperial notice by suppressing the quarrels of the factions, organizing trade in the “so-called monopoly”—an action rather suggestive of modern Egyptian government policy—and saving money by suppressing or reducing the lavish allotment of grain to the poor of Alexandria. These were probably temporary expedients, and less malevolent than Procopius suggests—it may have been that following a low Nile nothing was left over for Alexandria after the compulsory shipment to Constantinople had been made.<sup>75</sup> In any case, Hephaestus received his reward in a brief term of office as Pretorian Prefect at the capital, 551–552.<sup>76</sup>

Once more Egypt was left largely to its own devices, as long as the annual grain tribute was regularly collected and sent, as it continued to be throughout this period. In spite of the prescriptions of Edict XIII, local government fell largely into the hands of local notables, who often were both pagarchs and commanders of the local garrisons, such as they were—in most of Egypt a rather disorderly militia. The papyri from Aphrodito in the Thebaid present us with a vivid picture of the struggles of a supposedly privileged village, which, like many of the magnates, had the right of *autopragia*, collecting and forwarding its own taxes, and yet even so could not escape the violence of the local *grandees*. Aphrodito finally attempted, with no great success, to avoid local control by putting itself under Theodora’s patronage and so becoming technically part of the imperial estates. But one doubts whether even an important village in upper Egypt received much attention in the Empress’ quarters—and in one of the Aphrodito documents her husband was obliged

<sup>72</sup> Procopius, *Secret History* xxix 1–11; it may well be, as Stein suggests, that Pelagius yielded to Theodora in personal matters in order to secure what he considered more important points of policy (*Histoire*, pp. 391, 753); on the career of Liberius, see Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 562.

<sup>73</sup> P. Oxy. 130 (in *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, I [1898]); the date given by P. Lond. 1708 which in 567 refers to the second year of Apion as seventeen years before (see note on line 79).

<sup>74</sup> If he is, as seems likely, the John Theodore Menas Narses Chnoubammon Hephaestus of P. Flor. 292 and 293 (D. Comparetti and G. Vitelli, *Papiri Greco-Egizii* [Milan, 1915], III) who issued orders for the despatch of the *embolè* of the Thebaid in seventh and eighth indiction years, presumably 543–545.

<sup>75</sup> *Secret History* xxvi 35–44; a similar care for financial matters is reflected in P. Cairo 67031 ordering a reduction of the *sportulae* paid to officials on accession to office, which probably was issued by the same duke, here Flavius Joannes Theodore Menas Narses Chn(oubammon Hephaestus).

<sup>76</sup> John Lydus, *On the Magistrates* III 30; on Hephaestus’ career, see Stein, *Histoire*, pp. 753–755, 789.

to make the startling imperial confession that "The intrigues [of Theodosius] proved stronger than our commands."<sup>77</sup>

It may still have been hoped that the gradual extinction of the Monophysite hierarchy caused by the internment of the Patriarch Theodosius would open the way for further Chalcedonian successes in Egypt. But the revival of Monophysite energies by the work of Jacob Baradaï at least postponed this development, although the Egyptian Church was slow to act without its own archbishop, and Jacob is said to have consecrated only twelve bishops for Egypt.<sup>78</sup> The later history of the Chalcedonian line is scarcely Egyptian at all. Zoilus got into trouble at Alexandria when he hesitated to accept the imperial decrees against Origen and the Three Chapters, and so lost imperial support. He had to leave the city in 546 and five years later was obliged to resign.<sup>79</sup> His successor Apollinaris did not go to Alexandria until he had taken part in the condemnation of the Three Chapters at the Council of Constantinople in 553.<sup>80</sup> Meanwhile, like some modern Chalcedonian patriarchs of Alexandria, he lingered at Constantinople, appearing with his colleague of the imperial city at such functions as the dedication of the church of St. Irene in the suburb of Sycae.<sup>81</sup> Although some Latin supporters of the Three Chapters were interned at the monastery of Canopus,<sup>82</sup> the controversy barely reached the ears of the native Egyptians. Only later did they hear that Justinian had assembled a large council of bishops, including Vigilius of Rome, to condemn the Nestorian Theodoret, yet continued to support the Council of Chalcedon.<sup>83</sup>

It must have been immediately on Apollinaris' appointment that his brother Abba Agathon was sent to Alexandria with imperial authority to investigate the finances of the Church, which, in the absence of a patriarch, had been mismanaged by the Deacon Eustochius. He was now imprisoned, but shortly escaped to Constantinople with his ill-gotten gains, with the help of which he shortly became Patriarch of Jerusalem.<sup>84</sup> A later legend tells how Apollinaris finally arrived at Alexandria as military commander, assembled the people in church, and then revealed his ecclesiastical character and ordered them to

<sup>77</sup> P. Cairo 67024, lines 15-16; details of the sorrows of Aphrodito in P. Cairo 67002, 67283, etc. (see summary in Rouillard, *Administration Civile*, pp. 213-215). The reference is of course to a local magnate, not to the Patriarch Theodosius.

<sup>78</sup> John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 50, in PO, 19, p. 503 (157).

<sup>79</sup> Victor Tunnunensis, *Chronicon* 551 (MGH, *AA*, XI, p. 202)—the Bishop of Tunnunum seems well informed about events at Alexandria but uncertain about dates before his own arrival in Egypt in 555. On the dating of Zoilus' removal, see Maspero, *Histoire*, pp. 154-156; and on Zoilus and his successor, cf. John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* xcii 7-10, p. 146.

<sup>80</sup> J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, IX (Florence, 1763), cols. 173, 389.

<sup>81</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia* A.M. 6044 (PG, 108, cols. 501-502).

<sup>82</sup> Victor Tunnunensis, *Chronicon* 555 (MGH, *AA*, XI, p. 203) records his own experiences.

<sup>83</sup> John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* xcii 10-17, p. 146.

<sup>84</sup> Theophanes *Chronographia* A.M. 6059 (PG, 108, cols. 527-528); at Jerusalem Eustochius replaced Macarius, who had been the candidate of the Origenists, and sent three bishops to the Council of Constantinople in 553 (Cyril of Skythopolis, *Vita S. Sabbæ*, in Eduard Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis, Texte und Untersuchungen*, vol. 49, 2 [Leipzig, 1939], p. 198, and Mansi, *Sacrorum*, IX, cols. 176, 389-390). After ten respectable years as patriarch Eustochius was replaced by Macarius, and twenty years later ended his strange career in violent death, but with the reputation of sanctity, in a monastery at Constantinople—John of Ephesus, *History* III 35.

accept the hated Council, punishing by massacre their refusal to submit. This story which is, curiously, preserved by a later Melkite historian, is best considered as a symbolic statement of the position of the Chalcedonian patriarchs as representatives of the imperial power.<sup>85</sup> Actually, Apollinaris seems to have been a gentle soul, personally liked by both parties, even though the Copts later remembered that he had ordered "that none of the believing bishops should be seen in the city of Alexandria."<sup>86</sup> In his time began the truce between Monophysites and Chalcedonians which was to last for eighty years. The Chalcedonians controlled the churches of Alexandria—except for two in the old Egyptian quarter of Rakoti.<sup>87</sup> Outside the city they had only some footholds in monastic centers, including their old stronghold at Canopus, and in official circles elsewhere.

Apollinaris was accompanied at the Council of 553 by four bishops. They may have been merely titular—though two of the sees mentioned, Antinoë, capital of the Thebaid, and Ptolemais, perhaps rather the Cyrenaic than the upper Egyptian city of that name, were centers of government activity where there may have been some respect for imperial policy.<sup>88</sup> He is said later to have called three monks from Sinai for Babylon, the military fortress now known as Old Cairo, and neighboring sees, which suggests that he had no suitable candidates among his own clergy; and in any case the Bishop of Babylon found little to do and retired to his own cell.<sup>89</sup> Outside of a very limited sphere what we may now begin to call the Coptic Church reigned supreme. During the patriarchate of Zoilus, one of Justinian's theological efforts attempted to commend the Chalcedonian position as he understood it to the monks of the Enaton, but it does not seem that they paid any attention to the arguments of the imperial theologian.<sup>90</sup> Still less was his final flirtation with the aphthartodocetist position of importance, or even widely known, in Egypt, though Apollinaris of Alexandria was among the Chalcedonian hierarchs who were prepared to resist their aged sovereign's eccentricity and who were relieved of the problem by his death.<sup>91</sup>

## V

In Egypt as elsewhere the historical significance of Justinian's policy derives as much from the effects of his failures as from the results of his successes.

<sup>85</sup> Eutychius (Said ibn Batrik) *Annales*, in PG, 111, cols. 1069–70; so I think correctly interpreted by Wigram, *Separation*, p. 126 (as against Maspero's defense of the story, *Histoire*, pp. 160–163); for what it's worth, John of Nikiu (*Chronicle* xcii 9, p. 146) who even makes Apollinaris a Theodosian, and John Moschus (*Pratum spirituale* 193, PG, 87, 3, cols. 3071–3076) agree in praising his gentle disposition.

<sup>86</sup> *History of the Patriarchs*, p. 469.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 467.

<sup>88</sup> Mansi, *Sacrorum*, IX cols. 175–176, 392–394.

<sup>89</sup> John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale* 123–124 (PG, 87, 3, cols. 2985–2988); similarly Zoilus had called a Palestinian monk to the bishopric of the border town of Pelusium, which may well have had a Chalcedonian congregation (*Vita S. Sabbæ* p. 127).

<sup>90</sup> In PG, 86, 1, cols. 1103–1146.

<sup>91</sup> Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History* IV 39.

The constitution laid down in Edict XIII remained the formal pattern of government till the end of Roman Egypt. Alexandria continued to be a center of Byzantine influence in church and state, though early in the seventh century there was even an *augustal* who was a supporter of the national church.<sup>92</sup> The Chalcedonian patriarch controlled the great wealth of the Church of Alexandria (a situation reflected in the famous Life of St. John the Almoner<sup>93</sup>), which may have been the government's main interest in these matters. Otherwise the country was politically largely ignored, though occasionally convulsed by local disorders,<sup>94</sup> until once more involved in the affairs of the great world by the stirring events of the reign of Heraclius. The division of authority in Egypt at least facilitated the Persian occupation and the Arab conquest of 639–641.

In ecclesiastical affairs the death of Theodora had made no change in the semitoleration which the Egyptian Monophysites enjoyed. The main external factor in their history was the long survival of Theodosius, who still lingered on at Constantinople, though after 548 no longer so close to the imperial palace. After the death of Severus he was the titular leader of his party, and his long exile turned the once unpopular Archbishop into a confessor of the Monophysite faith. Gaianites and *acephali* still survived, but as minor groups. The theology of Severus and Theodosius came to prevail, and opponents could refer to the whole party as Theodosians, a name which the Copts themselves later accepted.<sup>95</sup> But when the Patriarch finally died in 566, a year after Justinian,<sup>96</sup> his long absence had thrown ecclesiastical administration into confusion. Ten years of uncertainty elapsed before a generally recognized successor was in office—and Peter IV is said to have consecrated seventy or eighty bishops during his brief pontificate (576–577).<sup>97</sup> With him the double succession of Chalcedonians and Copts in the Egyptian Church is definitely established, as it has continued to the present day. So the separate existence of the Coptic Church, something which the Emperor never intended, is the one permanent result of the Egyptian policy followed by Justinian, or indeed, as one should rather say, of the policies followed by Justinian and Theodora.

<sup>92</sup> Anastasius Sinaita, *Hodegos* 10 (PG, 89, col. 173)—the date is “after Eulogius,” who died late in the reign of Phocas, ca 608; on Alexandria at this period, cf. Hardy, *Christian Egypt*, pp. 156–162.

<sup>93</sup> H. Gelzer, ed., *Leontios von Neapolis' Leben des heiligen Johannes des barmherzigen Erzbischofs von Alexandrien* (Freiburg, 1893); tr. in Elizabeth Dawes and N. H. Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints* (Oxford, 1948), pp. 193–270.

<sup>94</sup> Such as those described by John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, xcvi, pp. 157–160.

<sup>95</sup> One of the earliest references in Victor Tunnunensis, *Chronicon*, 539 (MGH, AA, XI, p. 199); *History of the Patriarchs*, p. 468, “[we] are counted worthy to be called Theodosians.”

<sup>96</sup> The event is carefully dated by Victor Tunnunensis, *Chronicon* 540 (MGH, AA, XI, p. 200) and John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, 48, in PO, 18, p. 688 (486).

<sup>97</sup> John of Ephesus, *History* I 40; IV 12.